



## **POLICY FOR THE CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLORS TO FILL CASUAL VACANCIES**

August 2017

## 1. Introduction

This co-option policy is based on the NALC Legal Briefing – Good Practice for selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils.

The Council has power to co-opt a person onto the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met (i.e. the vacancy had been the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered electors in the relevant Ward have requested an election by the deadline date specified by the District Returning Officer).

Having completed this process, notification will be received from Wealden District Council that an election has not been called and the vacancy can be filled by the co-option process.

## 2. Filling the vacancy by co-option

The Parish Council is then required to fill the vacancy at the next available opportunity, which is usually at the next full Council meeting.

Vacancies will be advertised on the Parish Council website and in the office window and in other publications, such as the local press, where possible.

Expressions of interest will be invited by filling in the skills audit form for potential new members, together with a supporting letter or email. Nominees will be supplied with the qualification requirements and must satisfy themselves as to their eligibility to seek office.

Upon receipt of completed expressions of interest, the Clerk will invite the nominees to the next full Council meeting, where an opportunity will be given for them to speak to the Council in support of their application.

## 3. Voting procedure

Once all nominees have spoken to the Council, a vote will take place to co-opt the new councillor. This should generally be by show of hands, but if requested by two Members, may be by written ballot. Ballot slips must show the name of the voting Member, anonymous votes are not allowed.

The person co-opted must achieve an absolute majority vote and it may be necessary for several rounds of voting to take place to achieve this, particularly where more than one vacancy is to be filled.

## 4. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The successful nominee must complete the Declaration, witnessed by the Clerk. They may then join the meeting. They will receive an introductory pack, comprising:

- Latest set of Minutes for all Meetings
- Timetable of Meetings
- Terms of reference for all Committees
- Form for appointment on to Committees
- Contact details for Members
- Induction notes for new councillors
- Budget and Precept for the current financial year